California's DROUGHT

November

WATER CONDITIONS

Precipitation

In California, most precipitation falls as snow and rain during the fall, winter and early spring. Summers in California, especially in the Central Valley and Southern California are mostly dry. The amount of precipitation that falls is one way of making year-by-year comparisons as to whether the state is experiencing wet or dry conditions.

Current Conditions

- The last two water years, October 1, 2006 thru September 30, 2008 left a deficit of nearly 28" precipitation in the Northern and Central Sierra, source of much of our water supply.
- For the Northern Sierra, 2007 and 2008 marks the ninth driest two-year period in 88 years of record.

Lake Oroville

- Statewide average precipitation for the last 2 years has been about 70% of average.
- Some parts of Southern California experienced their driest year on record during water year 2006-2007, with other locations receiving near record low rainfall.

Reservoirs

In California, winter precipitation and spring snowmelt are captured in surface water reservoirs to provide both flood protection and water supply to the state. Reservoir storage also factors into drought assessment.

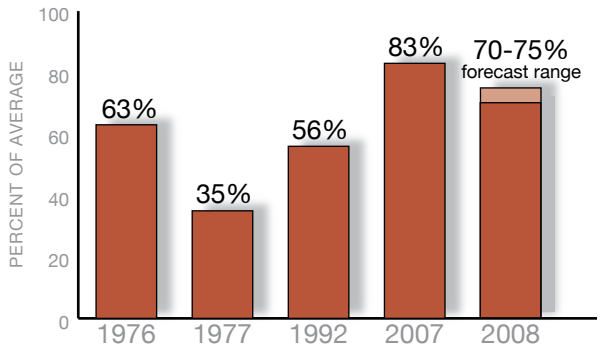
Current Conditions

Current Reservoir Levels	
Shasta	28%
Oroville	29%
Folsom	24%
Trinity	42%
New Melones	46%
Don Pedro	51%
Exchequer	25%
San Luis	12%
Millerton	33%
Pine Flat	12%
Pyramid	70%
Castaic	70%

Percent of Capacity as of Nov. 1, 2008

- Statewide average reservoir levels are 69% of average for this date. Last year at this time they were at 86% of average.
- Lake Oroville had its lowest carryover storage (October 1 level) since the drought of 1977.

Comparing Historically Dry Years



December 1 storage comparisons for other historically dry years

Runoff

Since the bulk of California's precipitation falls over higher elevations, river runoff is a substantial indicator of the state's water supply.

- Statewide runoff last year (October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2008) was 57% of average , following 53% of average runoff ending September 30, 2007.
- The Sacramento and San Joaquin River systems, which represent the bulk of the state's reservoir inflow, have two-year streamflow near the lowest 10% of historical range.